

# American Literary Periods

Colonial Period (Puritanism) (1620-1750)

Revolutionary Period (Age of Reason) (1750-1800)

Romanticism (1800-1865)

Transcendentalism (1840-1860)

American Gothic (1830-1850)

Realism (1865-1914)

Regionalism (1865-1895)

Naturalism (1885-1945)

Modernism (1914-1945)

Lost Generation (1917-1930)

Harlem Renaissance (1919-1937)

Contemporary (1939-)

Southern Gothic (1930-1940)

Beat Movement (1950-1965)

Confessional Poetry

Post-Modernism (1940-1970)

African-American

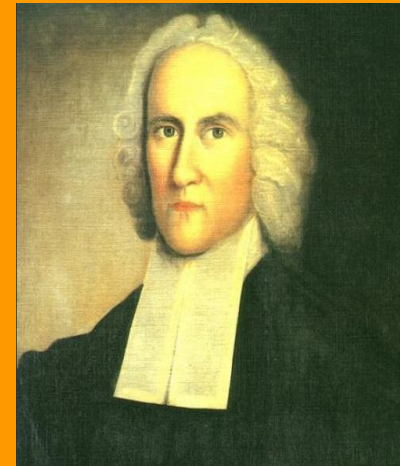
# Colonial Period (Puritanism) (1620-1750)

## Characteristics of the Literature utilitarian, instructive, or religious



Anne Bradstreet

There's wealth enough; I need no more.  
Farewell, my pelf; farewell, my store.  
The world no longer let me love;  
My hope and Treasure lies above.



Jonathan Edwards

How dreadful is the state of those that are  
daily and hourly in danger of this great wrath,  
and infinite misery! But this is the dismal  
case of every soul in this congregation, that  
has not been born again...

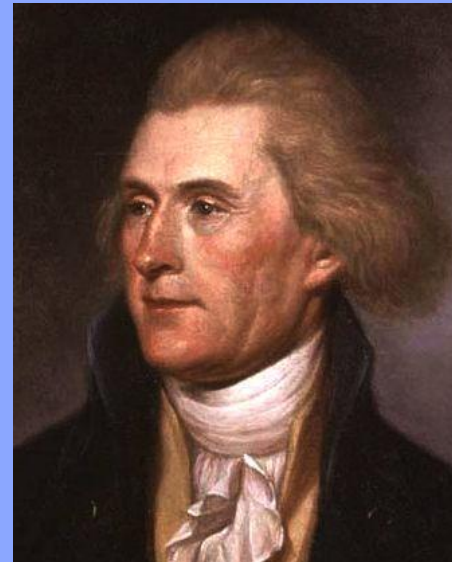
# Revolutionary Period (Rationalism) (1750-1800)

## Characteristics of the Literature: political



Thomas Paine

“The cause of America is, in a great measure, the cause of all mankind.”



Thomas Jefferson

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

# Romanticism (1800-1865)

## Characteristics of the Literature

- Focus on the individual (not group/society)
- A sense of idealism or optimism
- Focus on emotions and imagination (not reason)
- Emphasis on the splendors of nature
- Fascination with the supernatural (some writers)

# Notable Romantic Authors

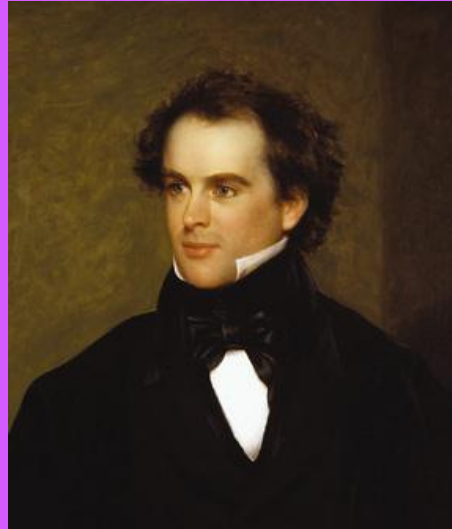


Washington Irving

**“Legend of Sleepy Hollow,”**

**“Rip Van Winkle,”**

**“The Devil and Tom Walker”**

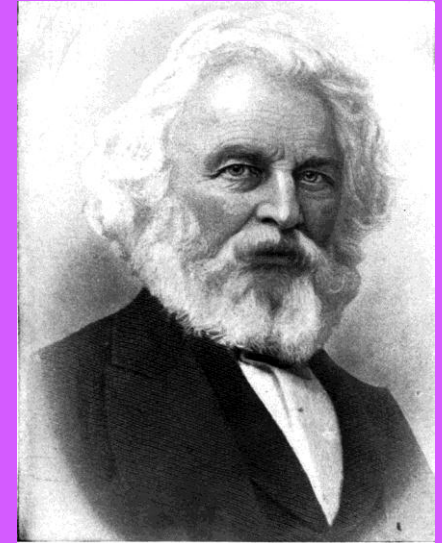


Nathaniel Hawthorne

***The Scarlet Letter,***

**“Rappacini’s Daughter,”**

**“The Minister’s Black Veil”**



Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

**“Song of Hiawatha,”**

**“A Psalm of Life”**

# Transitional Authors

(A little Romanticism, a little Transcendentalism)

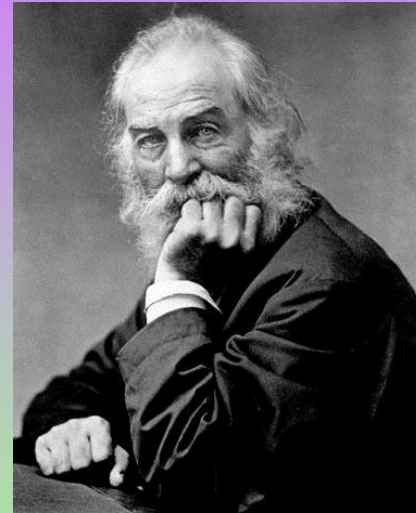
## Emily Dickinson



“Because I Could Not Stop  
for Death”

“Hope is the Thing with  
Feathers”

## Walt Whitman



*Leaves of Grass*

“Song of Myself”

“I Hear America Singing”

# Transcendentalism (1840-1860)

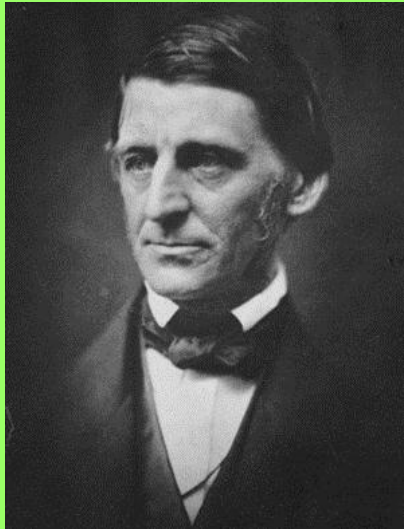
## Central Beliefs of Transcendentalists

- Intuition is superior to rationality
- Self-reliance and individualism outweigh external authority and blind conformity
- The natural world is a doorway to the spiritual or ideal world.
- Everything in the world, including humans, is a reflection of the divine soul (Oversoul).



# Notable Transcendentalist Authors

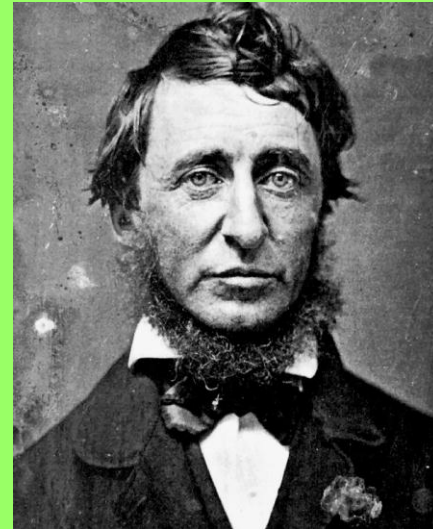
Ralph Waldo Emerson



*Nature*

*Self-Reliance*

Henry David Thoreau



*Walden*

*Civil Disobedience*



# American Gothic (1830-1850)

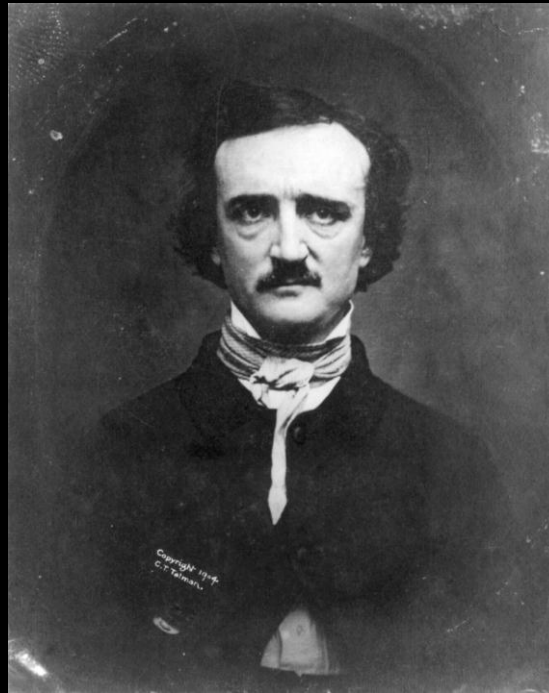


- Mysterious, unusual settings
- Violent events
- Grotesque characters
- Terror or horror
- Magic or the supernatural
- Bizarre situations



# Notable Gothic Author

Edgar Allan Poe



“The Raven,” “The Pit and the Pendulum,” “The Tell-Tale Heart,” “The Cask of Amontillado,” “The Black Cat,” “The Masque of the Red Death”

# Realism (1865-1914)

## Characteristics of the Literature

- Renders reality closely and in comprehensive detail.
- Characters appear in their real complexity
- Class is important
- Events will usually be plausible.
- Diction is natural vernacular, not heightened or poetic;
- Objectivity in presentation

# Notable Realist Authors

Ambrose Bierce



“An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge”

Kate Chopin



*The Awakening*

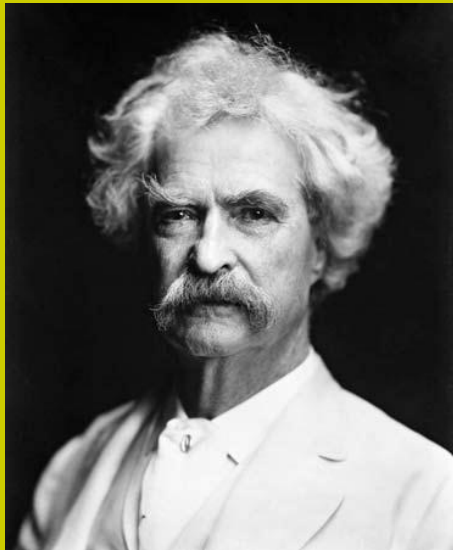
“The Story of an Hour”

# Regionalism (1865-1895)

- Captures distinct and unique qualities of a geographic area and its people
- Use of local color
- The physical environment of an area
- The mood of a time and place
- The ways people talk and how they think

# Notable Regionalist Authors

- Mark Twain

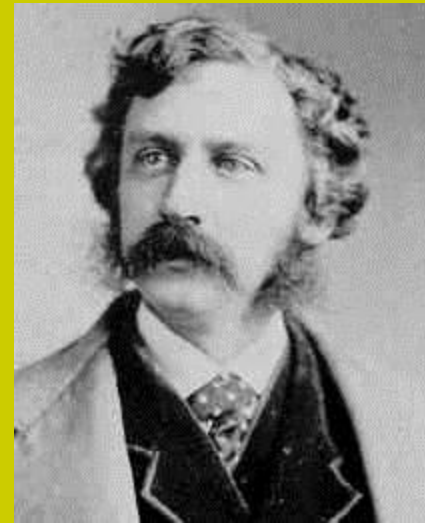


*A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*

*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

"The Notorious Jumping Frog of Calaveras County"

## Bret Harte



"The Outcasts of Poker Flat"

"The Luck of Roaring Camp"